

DHHS Identifies First Cases of Chikungunya in the Granite State

Concord, NH — The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services

(DHHS) is announcing two cases of chikungunya in people who traveled to the Caribbean. These are the first identified cases in New Hampshire of the virus, which is spread by mosquitoes and found in many countries, though most recently in the Caribbean and Central and South America. Currently there is no concern of local transmission of this virus in New Hampshire because the types of mosquitoes that carry the virus have not been identified in this area.

The chikungunya virus was first identified in Tanzania in 1952. It is spread by mosquitoes to the Americas, where it was first identified on the island of St. Martin in 2013. The most common symptoms of chikungunya infection are fever and joint pain. Other symptoms may include headache, muscle pain, joint swelling, and rash. Outbreaks have occurred in countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Indian and Pacific Oceans. There is no vaccine against chikungunya and no specific treatment at this time. Chikungunya rarely results in death, but the symptoms can sometimes be severe and debilitating. The incubation period is generally 2–7 days but can be as long as two weeks.

“While this is our first announcement of this virus,” said DHHS Public Health Director Dr. José Montero, “unfortunately it probably won’t be the last. This disease and the mosquitoes that carry it are spreading. We want to urge people who are traveling to areas where this virus now exists to take the same precautions when outdoors that they would here to prevent being bitten by mosquitoes, namely wear an effective insect repellent, long sleeves, and pants. In some countries a bed net might be advisable if screens are not available.”

People who have symptoms of chikungunya and have recently traveled to a country where chikungunya is spread by mosquitoes should contact their healthcare provider. For more information about chikungunya, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/chikungunya or the DHHS website at www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/team.htm.

Thank you,

Northeastern Mosquito Control Association, Inc.

www.nmca.org

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